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Letter dated 15 April 2002 from the Permanent Representative of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I should like to refer to the open meeting of the Security Council on the situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine, and to the statement which I made at the Council's 4510th (resumed) meeting held on 9 April 2002. In it, I referred to the systematic policies which the Zionist regime persistently pursues of disparaging, denigrating and deriding all peace initiatives put forward by the international community, thereby causing them all to fail, and stated that the Prince Abdullah initiative will fare no better than its predecessors. In order to prove the point, I read the Council extracts from an article entitled "How to Torpedo the Saudis", written by Uri Avnery.

I am therefore attaching the aforementioned article and should be grateful if you would have it circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Abuzed Omar **Dorda**
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How To Torpedo The Saudis

Uri Avnery

In May 1967, an Arab prince had proposed that the whole Arab world would recognize Israel and establish normal relations with it, in return for Israel's recognition of the Green Line border, we would have believed that the days of the Messiah had arrived. Masses of people would have run into the street, singing and dancing, as they did on November 29, 1947, when the United Nations called for the establishment of a Jewish and an Arab state in Palestine.

But then disaster struck: we conquered the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the Labor and Likud governments filled them up with settlements, and today this offer sounds to many like a malicious anti-Semitic plot.

The leaders of Israel tell us: Don't worry. Just as we survived Pharaoh, so we shall survive Emir Abdallah. (This is an allusion to a famous Israeli song.)

So what will happen?

In Israel, every international initiative designed to put an end to the conflict passes through three stages: (a) denial, (b) misrepresentation, (c) liquidation. That's how the Sharon-Peres government will deal with this one, too. It can draw on 53 years of experience, during which both Labor and Likud governments have succeeded in scuttling every peace plan put forward.

(We must not suspect, God forbid, that the successive Israeli governments were opposed to peace. Not at all. Every one of them wanted peace. They all longed for peace. "Provided peace gives us the whole country, at least up to the Jordan River, and lets us cover all of it with Jewish settlements." Until now, all peace plans have fallen short of that.)

PHASE A is designed to belittle the offer. "There is nothing new there," the Political Sources would assert. "It is offered solely for tactical purposes. It is a political gimmick." If the offer comes from an Arab: "He says it to the international community, but not to his own people." In short: "It's not serious."

One proven method is to concentrate on one word and argue that it shows the dishonesty of the whole offer. For example, before the October 1973 war, President Anwar Sadat of Egypt made a far-reaching peace offer. Golda Meir rejected it out of hand. Her Arabists discovered that Sadat spoke of "salaam" but not of "sulh" (reconciliation), which "proves" that he does not mean real peace. More than 2000 Israel soldiers and tens of thousand Egyptians paid with their lives for this word. After that, a salaam treaty was signed.

Such methods are already being applied now to the Saudi offer. First it was said that Crown Prince Abdullah had spoken about his initiative only with an American journalist, but not addressed his own people. When it transpired that it was widely published in all Saudi papers, both at home and in London, another argument was put forward: the prince has made his offer only because Saudis had become unpopular in the United States after the Twin Towers outrage. (As if this matters.) In short: Abdullah has not become a real Zionist.

Just as we survived Pharaoh, so we shall survive Emir Abdallah

This point was widely discussed in the Israeli media. Commentators commentated, scholars showed their scholarly prowess. But not one (not one!) of them discussed the actual content of the offer.

PHASE B is designed to outsmart the offer. We do not reject the offer. Of course not! We are longing for peace! So we welcome the "positive trend" of the offer and kick the ball out of the field.

The best method is to ask for a meeting with the Arab leader who proposed the offer "to clarify the issues". That sounds logical. Americans think that if two people have a quarrel, they should meet and discuss the matter, in order to end it. What can be more reasonable than that?

But a conflict between nations does not resemble a quarrel between two people. Every Arab peace offer rests on a two-part premise: "You give back the occupied territories, and you get recognition and 'normalization'." Normalization includes, of course, meetings of the leaders. When the Israeli government demands a meeting with Arab leaders "to clarify details", it actually tries to get the reward (normalization) without delivering the goods (withdrawal from the occupied territories). A beautiful trick, indeed. If the Arab leaders refuse to meet, well, it only shows that their peace offer is a sham, doesn't it?

Many peace offers have fallen into this trap. Ben-Gurion offered to meet with Muhammad Naguib, the Egyptian ruler after the 1952 revolution. Several Prime Ministers asked to meet Hafez al-Assad. Only Sadat outsmarted the smart ones and turned the tables on them. He came to Jerusalem on his own initiative.

When the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted resolution 242, the Israeli government did not accept it. Only much later, when there was no way out, it accepted it, according to the Israeli interpretation. This concentrated on the article "the" that is missing in the English version (which demands withdrawal from "occupied territories" instead of from "the occupied territories"), contrary to the French version, in which the article only appears. (The Soviets were caught napping, because there is no article in the Russian language.)

The preferred method is to kill the spirit of the offer slowly, to talk about it endlessly, to interpret it this way and that way, to drag negotiations on and on, to put forward a condition that the other side cannot accept, until the initiative yields in silence. That's what happened to the Conciliation Committee in Lausanne, that is what happened to most of the European and American peace plans.

PHASE C: If phases A and B have not worked, the liquidation stage arrives. Nowadays it is called "targeted prevention" or simply "assassination" by the army.

Against the original UN mediator, the Swedish Count Folke Bernadotte, "targeted prevention" was applied literally: he was shot and killed. The killers were "dissidents", but Ben-Gurion did not shed any tears.

Usually, Israeli governments use two deadly torpedoes in their arsenal: the US Congress and the American media. William Rogers, President Nixon's secretary of state, for example, proposed a peace plan that included the withdrawal of Israel to the pre-1967 border, with "insubstantial changes". Israel released its torpedoes and sunk Rogers together with his plan. His job was taken over by the Jewish megalomaniac, Henry Kissinger, and that was the end of peace plans.

Can the Saudi initiative be scuttled in the same way? If the Saudis stay their course, it will not be easy to intercept it. This time the target is not a small frigate, not even a destroyer, but a mighty aircraft carrier. A great effort will be needed to torpedo it.